

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 299369 TOSEC 320116

NODIS

FOL TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM GENEVA DTD 09 DEC 1976 QTE

S E C R E T GENEVA 9789.

NODIS

DEPT PASS BRUSSELS FOR THE SECRETARY'S PARTY

FOR AMB SCHAUFLELE FROM WISNER

DEPT PASS LONDON FOR SEITZ

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR RH UK

SUBJECT: RHODESIA CONFERENCE: SEEKING EARLY ADJOURNMENT

1. SUMMARY: I SAW SMITH THIS MORNING AND WENT
OVER WITH HIM THE POINTS IN MY INSTRUCTIONS, EMPHASIZING
THAT WE WOULD NOT WANT TO SEE THE CONFERENCE BREAK UP
BECAUSE OF ANYTHING THE RHODESIANS MIGHT SAY OR DO.
SMITH WAS IN A VERY STUBBORN MOOD. OUR MEETING WAS
COOL BUT VERY CORRECT. HE GAVE EVERY EVIDENCE OF HIS
SENSE OF BETRAYAL BY BOTH OURSELVES AND THE BRITISH, IN
THAT THE FIVE POINTS HAD NOT BEEN ARGUED HERE IN
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GENEVA AND THAT IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES NEITHER THEY
NOR ANNEX C WOULD SURVIVE THE CONFERENCE. HE HELD
THE BRITISH PARTICULARLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS. HE NOW
BELIEVES HIS ONLY HOPE IS TO ADJOURN HERE AND TO GET
THE NATIONALISTS BACK HOME TO RHODESIA WHERE, HE

BELIEVES, THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE "MARVELOUS" OPPORTUNITY CREATED BY HIS SEPT 24 SPEECH. HE PLANS TO TABLE NO NEW PROPOSALS IN GENEVA SINCE HE REALIZES THEY WOULD NOT FLY. HE REMAINS EXTREMELY SKEPTICAL AND SUSPICIOUS ABOUT A BRITISH ROLE IN THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT AND WOULD NEED TIME TO STUDY ANY BRITISH PROPOSALS. IN SHORT, HIS PREFERRED COURSE IS TO ADJOURN QUICKLY, EVEN BEFORE THE WEEKEND, AND TO RESUME THE CONFERENCE AFTER CHRISTMAS, BUT NOT NECESSARILY IN GENEVA. END SUMMARY.

2. SMITH MADE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR HIS DISSATISFACTION WITH THE LACK OF PROGRESS AT THE CONFERENCE AND HIS STRONG VIEW THAT IT WOULD NOW BE BEST TO ADJOURN THE CONFERENCE. LATER, UNDER QUESTIONING, SMITH INDICATED THAT HE IS THINKING ABOUT ADJOURNING THE CONFERENCE THIS WEEK, BEFORE THE SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH CALLAGHAN, THOUGH HE SAID THAT HE HAD NOT MADE A FINAL DECISION ON THIS AND WAS PREPARED TO SEE IF ANYTHING USEFUL COULD BE DONE HERE. HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC. SMITH SAID THAT IN THEIR MEETING YESTERDAY, IVOR RICHARD HAD CONCEDED THAT THERE WAS NOT CHANCE OF COMPLETING THE CONFERENCE BY THE TARGET DATE AND, MOREOVER, NO CHANCE OF EVEN STARTING DISCUSSIONS ALONG LINES OF THE FIVE POINTS. RICHARD HAD SUGGESTED SOME THINGS TO KEEP THE CONFERENCE GOING, BUT SMITH SAID HE HAD RESISTED THESE SUGGESTIONS BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE MEANT HIS DOING THE WORK OF THE CHAIRMAN.

3. SMITH REITERATED HIS VIEW THAT RICHARD HAD BEEN A VERY WEAK CHAIRMAN. IF RICHARD HAD INSISTED ON STICKING TO THE AGREEMENT THAT THE FIVE POINTS WERE THE SOLE BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS, THE NATIONALISTS WOULD HAVE GONE ALONG. INSTEAD RICHARD HAD ALLOWED AND, IN SMITH'S VIEW, EVEN ENCOURAGED THE NATIONALISTS TO MAKE EXTREME DEMANDS. SMITH TOLD RICHARD YESTERDAY
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THAT HE SAW NO POINT IN CONTINUING THE CONFERENCE IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. IT WOULD BE BETTER TO ADJOURN, GET THE NATIONALISTS OUT OF GENEVA WHERE THEY SPEND TOO MUCH TIME PLAYING TO THE GRANDSTAND AND ARE SUBJECT TO SOVIET INFLUENCE, AND MOVE THINGS BACK TO RHODESIA WHERE THERE WOULD BE TIME TO REASSESS AND RESTORE SOME SENSE OF REALITY. SINCE THE CONFERENCE MUST ADJOURN FOR CHRISTMAS ANYWAY, THE RHODESIANS COULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS FACT TO ADJOURN NOW AND HOPE TO GET DISCUSSIONS BACK TO THE FIVE POINTS DURING THE RECESS. THOUGH HE HAD NO FIXED VIEWS, HE THOUGH A RECESS MIGHT LAST AT LEAST FOUR WEEKS. HE SUGGESTED THA AFTERWARDS THE CONFERENCE SHOULD BE RECONVENED IN SALISBURY -

BUT HE DID NOT RULE OUT GENEVA.

4. SMITH EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAD GONE OUT OF HIS WAY NOT TO CAUSE THE CONFERENCE TO BREAK UP AND THAT HIS DELEGATION WOULD NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY BREAK-UP. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON AS WELL THAT HE PREFERRED A RECESS, DURING WHICH TIME THE PARTIES COULD GET AWAY AND REASSESS THEIR POSITIONS.

5. ASKED WHETHER HE INTENDED TO TABLE A PAPER AT THE CONFERENCE FLESHING OUT THE FIVE POINTS, SMITH REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT. EVERYONE, HE SAID, KNOWS THE RHODESIAN POSITION AND THERE IS NO NEED TO RESTATE IT. "IF RICHARD IS UNABLE TO BRING THE BLACK DELEGATIONS AROUND TO DISCUSSING THE FIVE POINTS, THEN THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN USEFULLY DO. IF HE FAILS TO DO SO, WE WOULD REGARD THIS AS A BREACH OF OUR CONTRACT ON THE FIVE POINTS." THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE CONFERENCE HAD BEEN CONVENED, HE SAID, WAS TO SET UP A COUNCIL OF STATE, BUT WE HAVE GOTTEN WELL AWAY FROM THAT. TO TABLE SOMETHING NOW WOULD ONLY AGGRAVATE THE SITUATION. THEREFORE, HE REITERATED, HIS STRONG VIEW IS THAT THE CONFERENCE SHOULD QUIETLY ADJOURN.

6. SMITH SAID HE DID NOT IMAGINE THAT THE NATIONALISTS WOULD REFUSE TO RECONVENE AFTER A RECESS, WITH THE SECRET

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POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF MUGABE, SINCE THEY ALL REALIZE IT IS NECESSARY TO CONTINUE. IN HIS VIEW, MUGABE'S ABSENCE WOULD BE AN ADVANTAGE. THERE IS A MOVE IN RHODESIA, HE SAID, TO GET THE VARIOUS PARTIES TOGETHER, INCLUDING BOTH FACTIONS OF THE ANC, AND THIS WOULD BE USEFUL. NOT ONLY EUROPEANS BUT AFRICANS IN RHODESIA AS WELL ARE DISENCHANTED WITH THE WAY THINGS HAVE GONE IN GENEVA AND HAVE URGED THE NATIONALISTS HERE TO GET ON WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY THEY HAVE HERE. IF THE CONFERENCE IS ADJOURNED AND RECONVENED IN RHODESIA, WHERE THE ATMOSPHERE IS CALMER AND MORE CONSTRUCTIVE, THERE IS A BETTER CHANCE OF REACHING A SETTLEMENT. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH AFRICAN MODERATES BOTH HERE AND IN RHODESIA AND IS CONVINCED AS THE BASIS OF THESE CONTACTS THAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO SETTLE AS THE BASIS OF THE FIVE POINTS. "I DON'T WANT TO SPEAK AROGANTLY," HE SAID, "BUT I BELIEVE WE HAVE A BETTER IDEA THAN EITHER YOU OR THE BRITISH ABOUT NATIONALIST ATTITUDES BOTH HERE AND IN RHODESIA."

7. I ASKED SMITH WHETHER THERE WAS ANYTHING IN THE

NATIONALIST PROPOSALS THAT, IF AMENDED, MIGHT SERVE AS A BASIS FOR CONTINUED NEGOTIATIONS. HE REPLIED THAT HE HAD NOT STUDIED THE PROPOSALS THAT CLOSELY. HE SUGGESTED A RECESS WOULD ALLOW HIM TIME TO CONVENE A SPECIAL COMMISSION IN RHODESIA TO STUDY THE NATIONALIST PROPOSALS AND SEE WHETHER ELEMENTS OF THEM WARRNATED FURTHER CONSIDERATION. BUT HE STRESSED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THE RHODESIANS COULD CHANGE THEIR POSITION NOW. AS FAR AS THE RHODESIANS ARE CONCERNED, HE SAID, THE FIVE POINTS REPRESENTED A FIRM CONTRACT. IT WOULD CAUSE ABSOLUTE CHAOS IN RHODESIA IF WE WERE TO ABANDON THAT POSITION. THE RHODESIANS - THE WHITES IN PARTICULAR - ARE EXTREMELY DISENCHANTED WITH THE CONFERENCE HERE AND THEIR MORALE IS VERY BAD. "FOR US TO CHANGE OUR POSITION WOULD HAVE THE VERY EFFECT OF DAMAGING WHITE CONFIDENCE THAT DR. KISSINGER SO SOUGHT TO AVOID." HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE RHODESIAN PARLIAMENT WOULD BE VERY HAPPY TO FIND AN EXCUSE TO BACK AWAY FROM THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF THE SECRET

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FIVE POINTS. HE ALSO SAID IT HAD BEEN VERY DIFFICULT FOR HIM AND THE SECURITY SHIEFS TO SELL THE AGREEMENT TO THE SECURITY FORCES AND THAT WAS DONE STRICTLY ON THE BASIS OF THE FIVE POINTS. "IF WE CONCEDE MORE, THEIR SUSPICIONS WOULD BE CONFIRMED, AND THE WHOLE LOT OF THEM WOULD WALK OUT."

8. I ASKED WHETHER SMITH HAD GIVEN ANY THOUGHT TO THE IDEA OF AN EXPANDED BRITISH ROLE IN THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. HE SAID HE HAD NOT, SINCE IN PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS IT SEEMED CLEAR THAT THE BRITISH WOULD NOT GO ALONG. HE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT WAS MEANT BY BRITISH INVOLVEMENT BUT CERTAINLY ANY SUGGESTION OF UK CONTROL OVER THE SECURITY FORCES WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION." HOWEVER, IF THERE IS A SERIOUS PROPOSAL WE WILL STUDY IT."

9. FINALLY, SMITH RETURNED TO THE BRITISH ROLE IN THE CONFERENCE AND SAID THAT AFTER HIS SEPT 24 SPEECH THE BRITISH HAD COMPLIMENTED HIM ON HIS REASONABLENESS. "WHY THEN," HE ASKED, "DID THEY WANT US TO CHANGE OUR POSITION NOW." THE BRITISH HAD AGREED TO THE FIVE POINTS AND IT WAS THEIR BUSINESS TO MAKE THESE POINTS TO THE NATIONALISTS, BUT THEY HAVE NEVER ATTEMPTED TO EVEN INTRODUCE THE POINTS AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSION. IT IS THE LACK OF UK DRIVE, HE SAID, THAT IS THE REASON FOR THE FAILURE TO REACH AN AGREEMENT HERE.

10. I THEN ASKED SMITH WHETHER HE HAD, AS SUGGESTED IN SOME PRESS REPORTS, GIVEN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO APPLYING THE FIVE POINTS OUTSIDE OF THE GENEVA

FRAMEWORK AND STRESSED OUR BELIEF THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO DO THIS WITHOUT A MAJORITY OF THE GENEVA PARTICIPANTS WOULD BE DOOMED TO FAILURE AND STIMULATE DANGEROUS FACTIONALISM. SMITH SAID THAT HIS REMARKS ON THIS SUBJECT HAD BEEN ELICITED BY CONSTANT QUESTIONING BY THE PRESS AND THAT HE HAD NOT REALLY GIVEN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THIS IDEA AT THIS STAGE. SUCCESS, HE SAID, WOULD DEPEND ON HOW THE EXERCISE WAS CARRIED OUT AND WHETHER IT WOULD RECEIVE
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THE SUPPORT OF THE MAIN FACTIONS HERE; BUT IT WOULD BE STUPID TO DO THIS IF IT WILL NOT RECEIVE THE SUPPORT OF THE MAJOR WESTERN POWERS, INCLUDING THE US.

11. I AGAIN ASKED SMITH HIS IDEAS ABOUT AN ADJOURNMENT AND WHEN HE THOUGHT ONE SHOULD OCCUR. HE SAID HE HAD MADE NO HARD AND FAST RULES BUT EMPHASIZED THAT EACH DAY THE TALKS CONTINUED CREATED MORE DISADVANTAGES FOR THE RHODESIANS. HE SAID HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO GO ON IF THERE WAS SOMETHING USEFUL BUT DOUBTED THAT THE SECRETARY'S TALKS IN LONDON WOULD PRODUCE ANYTHING. HE LEFT THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT HE MIGHT WANT THE CONFERENCE TO ADJOURN BEFORE THE WEEKEND. I ARGUED STRONGLY AGAINST AN EARLY ADJOURNMENT AND ASKED IF HE WOULD POSTPONE A DECISION UNTIL AFTER THE SECRETARY'S MEETINGS IN LONDON THIS WEEKEND. HE DID NOT REPLY CATEGORICALLY BUT DID SAY HE WOULD GIVE THE MATTER SERIOUS THOUGHT AND WOULD AWAIT THE SECRETARY'S VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT. CATTO UNQTE ROBINSON

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